

The Executive Office for
United States Attorneys

DIRECTOR’S AWARDS CEREMONY



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

Welcome to the 36th Director's Awards Ceremony of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys. This program recognizes and celebrates the exceptional work, tremendous dedication, and distinguished achievements of the men and women of the United States Attorneys' offices, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, the Department of Justice, and our partners in the law enforcement community.

The award recipients that we are honoring have made extraordinary contributions to the mission of the Department of Justice. They have done so during some of our most austere and challenging times as public servants and, in so doing, exemplify the best in federal service. These individuals have worked diligently and selflessly to protect the rights of Americans, and we applaud each of them for their pursuit of justice and commitment to excellence.

I am honored to work with this talented group of award recipients and United States Attorneys. On behalf of the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, thank you for joining us in recognizing this year's honorees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Corey F. Ellis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Corey F. Ellis
Acting Director

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EXECUTIVE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Alana Robinson (Southern District of California) is recognized for her clear vision, innate sense of fairness, ethical core, interpersonal skills, calm demeanor, and creativity. Ms. Robinson began her career in 1990 as an AUSA in the Southern District of California. Since 2003, FAUSA Robinson has held every significant leadership position in the SDCA, including Narcotics Chief, Criminal Chief, First Assistant U.S. Attorney under three U.S. Attorneys, and Acting U.S. Attorney. In each role, Robinson implemented or initiated significant changes i.e., an onsite wiretap reviewer; the West Coast NAC; a revamped Ethics Advisor/Professional Responsibility Officer Corps; management training that collectively increased efficiency, enhanced transparency, strengthened leadership and advocacy skills, and facilitated DOJ's mission and AUSAs' professional development. A natural mentor, FAUSA Robinson is an inspiration to many employees.

Phillip A. Talbert (Eastern District of California) is recognized for his contributions during his 27 years with the Department. Since 2008, Mr. Talbert served in leadership roles in the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California. He is currently serving in his second term as the First Assistant United States Attorney, helping to lead the office under two different administrations, which is a testament to his steady leadership and commitment to the United States. He also served as Acting United States Attorney for nearly two years. Mr. Talbert's dedicated leadership will leave a lasting mark through his contributions to developing a robust training program for new AUSAs, opening a new branch office in Bakersfield, creating a fair and equitable salary structure for AUSAs, and implementing the office's first student loan repayment program, while serving as a sounding board for AUSAs every day.

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LIFETIME EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE AWARD

Stephanie Present-Podolak (District of Colorado) is recognized for her 28 years of exceptional contributions to the USAO community, her record of outstanding accomplishments, and her continued dedication to advancing the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program. AUSA Podolak's work led to Colorado's very first RICO indictment in the late 1990s. Ms. Podolak received several awards throughout her career for her work on drug and gang cases, and was even named her district's Honorary Deputy District Attorney in 2011. Over the course of almost three decades of service, Ms. Podolak served as her district's SLC, gang coordinator, violent crimes coordinator, EEOC and sexual harassment coordinator, and Special Counsel to the Criminal Chief, as well as her district's first female Criminal Division Chief. Ms. Podolak's dedication, work ethic, and abilities enhance the Department's legacy as well as her own.

Richard L. Murphy (Northern District of Iowa) is recognized for 35 years of exceptional service to the Department. Mr. Murphy served in nearly every leadership role one could hold as a prosecutor, including First Assistant United States Attorney, Criminal Division Chief, Senior Litigation Counsel, Antiterrorism Coordinator, and Counsel to the United States Attorney. Mr. Murphy also served as Special DOJ Counsel to the United States Sentencing Commission, as a special investigator for the Attorney General, and as Chair of the Attorney General Advisory Committee's Criminal Chiefs Working Group. Perhaps the most lasting part of Mr. Murphy's legacy are his three decades of unwavering fairness, good judgement, and utmost integrity while prosecuting many of the most important cases in the Northern District of Iowa.

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**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN A MANAGERIAL OR
SUPERVISORY ROLE**

Andrew Haden (Southern District of California) is recognized for his extraordinary leadership contributions since 2016. In July 2016, as supervisor of a reactive trial team, AUSA Haden excelled at developing agency partnerships and instilling strong advocacy and case handling skills in new prosecutors. In 2017, while juggling management duties related to border crimes prosecutions, AUSA Haden tried so many cases with junior attorneys that then-U.S. Attorney Adam Braverman chose him as “Trial Lawyer of the Year.” In 2018, AUSA Haden was asked to apply his leadership and oversight to the PSN program. Armed with strong people skills and a clear vision, AUSA Haden oversaw a 75 percent increase in PSN cases in 2018 and another 40 percent increase in 2019. Currently, as Chief of the Violent Crimes & Human Trafficking Section, AUSA Haden is leading groundbreaking prosecutions of human trafficking, Project Safe Childhood, civil rights and violent crime matters, many of which received national attention.

Tammy Reno (Executive Office for United States Attorneys) is recognized for her extraordinary leadership and management within EOUSA’s Office of Legal Programs. After becoming Acting Chief in June 2018, Ms. Reno successfully led multiple staffs through an extended period of transition, personally covering multiple unfilled supervisory positions until she planned and implemented a significant organizational restructuring of the Office. Her leadership provided her office new direction and cohesion, building new efficiencies, greater productivity and improved morale. For the last few years, as an Assistant Director in that office, Ms. Reno led and managed EOUSA’s important eLitigation efforts. Her visionary, strategic, and energetic leadership transformed eLitigation practices in U.S. Attorneys’ Offices to enable AUSAs to manage their most complex cases in a digital world.

**APPRECIATION AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS THAT
ENHANCE THE MISSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
FOR UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS AND THE
UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS' OFFICES**

Leslie Hagen, Delores Johnson, and Falisha McLamore-Brand (Executive Office for United States Attorneys) are recognized for their superior performance in providing training opportunities in the United States' most underserved communities, Indian country. During the past year, the National Advocacy Center's Indian Country training team traveled to numerous states to hold 20 legal training events for Indian Country AUSAs, tribal prosecutors and investigators, and medical professionals working tribal lands. In addition to traveling throughout the United States, the Indian Country training team developed and held 12 courses at the National Advocacy Center on important topics such as Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner training, Forensic Interviewing of Child and Adolescent Victims, Prosecution of Domestic Violence, and Reentry Workshops—all critical to advancing the Department's anti-violent crime initiative.

Robert J. Troester and Lori Hines (Western District of Oklahoma), and Brad Beyersdorf (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives) are recognized for their outstanding work to combat domestic violence in Oklahoma through the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative, OPERATION 922. This novel strategy fills a void in state law with 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8) & (9), which prohibit persons who are subject to a protective order, or who have a prior conviction for misdemeanor domestic assault and battery, from possessing firearms. From Spring 2018 through July 2020, OPERATION 922 led to the charging of 110 defendants from 16 different counties in WDOK. Of those defendants, 92 have been convicted, 71 have been sentenced to an average of 80 months, and 34.5 percent were documented gang members. By using federal charges to lock up domestic abusers caught with firearms, OPERATION 922 is serving state prosecutors as a force multiplier to hold domestic violence abusers accountable.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AS AN
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY – CRIMINAL**

Steven R. Welk and Christopher Brunwin (Central District of California) are recognized for obtaining federal racketeering and racketeering conspiracy convictions against members and associates of the notorious Mongols outlaw motorcycle gang. Since the Mongols gang was born in a California prison in the early 1970's, acts of extreme and random violence by its members and associates were the gang's defining feature for more than 40 years. At trial, AUSAs Welk and Brunwin organized and presented more than 200 physical exhibits, including guns, knives, ammunition, illegal drugs, and the gang's own "Constitution" and governing rules, which highlighted the rigid hierarchical structure of the gang. The prosecutors secured across-the-board verdicts despite a tight court schedule that challenged the government to efficiently present a complex body of evidence demonstrating the gang's extensive history of violent crime, drug-trafficking, and its decades-long war on law enforcement officers.

Scott D. Tenley, Jeffrey M. Chemerinsky, and Joseph D. Axelrad (Central District of California) are recognized for their exemplary work in the prosecution of violent Hobbs Act robbery spree across Southern California. Working with ATF and FBI officials, they prosecuted and convicted over 57 defendants for approximately 189 robberies since 2015. Through their tireless efforts, dozens of federally-coordinated investigations have resulted in the identification, apprehension, and prosecution of many violent and armed robbery crews. Notable cases include: indictments of 21-defendants of the Inglewood Family Bloods responsible for the theft of \$6.2 million in luxury watches, two defendants convicted of 30 convenience store robberies using "cowboy-style" guns, and several 2019 indictments of Nutty Bloc Crips members for violent and armed robberies of pharmacies. The program also provides training and support to local police departments and other AUSAs to promote the benefit of federal investigation and prosecution

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of violent crime throughout the Central District.

Ignacio J. Vázquez and Ilham A.Hosseini (Southern District of Florida) are recognized for their work on *United States v. Glass, et al.* The prosecution targeted the Dub Side Blood Family (DSBF) that operated out of the Allapattah neighborhood of Miami for seventeen years. DSBF plagued this neighborhood with drug trafficking, witness tampering, and pervasive acts of violence ranging from robbing people at gunpoint, robbing businesses, and engaging in gang rivalry, shootings, and murders. DSBF's criminal activity was so pervasive that members claimed control over an entire housing complex, where residents lived in fear and were unable to cooperate with local law enforcement's efforts to investigate the group. DSBF was so emboldened by its historical ability to succeed through acts of violence and witness tampering, that members continued running operations from local jails while they were incarcerated. Fourteen defendants were indicted and convicted. Three defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment for their involvement in homicides, while others received significant sentences.

Dan Chatham (Northern District of Iowa) is recognized for his decade of work as his district's chief opioid prosecutor. During this time, he prosecuted over 80 opioid cases, approximately 40 of which involved opioid deaths and/or injuries, and conducted six opioid overdose trials. The 2015 case of *United States v. Max Wright*, the first known fentanyl dealer in the Cedar Rapids area, is perhaps the most notable opioid prosecution handled by AUSA Chatham. In response to a substantial short-term increase in opioid overdoses in the district in early 2015, AUSA Chatham worked with investigators aggressively to investigate the sources of the drugs and ultimately prosecuted three defendants, including Wright, for distributing heroin and fentanyl resulting in death and serious bodily injury. Following a week-long trial, during which AUSA Chatham was lead counsel, Wright was sentenced to life in prison for conspiring to distribute heroin and fentanyl resulting in two deaths and six serious bodily injuries. As a result of his work,

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AUSA Chatham is a nationally recognized expert in the investigation and prosecution of overdose cases and is instrumental in the Department's battle against opioid abuse.

Bradley A. Blackington, Peter J. Blackett, and Michelle P. Brady (Southern District of Indiana) are recognized for their investigation and successful prosecution of pharmacy robberies in Indiana. After determining that Indiana ranked first or second in the United States for four consecutive years in the annual number of pharmacy robberies, SLC Blackington developed an investigative and prosecutorial strategy for reducing the number of pharmacy robberies occurring in Indiana. AUSAs Blackington, Blackett, and Brady proceeded to prosecute numerous pharmacy robbery cases, including a RICO prosecution of members of a gang known as "The Mob," who specialized in robbing pharmacies and distributing opioid prescription drugs in Indianapolis. The prosecution strategy resulted in the conviction of over 40 defendants for over 70 robberies of Indiana pharmacies. Pharmacy robberies in Indiana dropped from 168 per year to 22 in 2018.

Gregory T. Rosenberg (Eastern District of Kentucky) is recognized for his outstanding work in the OCDETF investigation and prosecution involving the Tennessee Pain Institute. This prosecution involved years of investigation using search warrants, subpoenas, and voluminous records from multiple states and pain clinics; illicit diversion proceeds in excess of \$8 million; and opioid diversion quantities exceeding 90,000 kilograms of converted drug weight. After a nearly month-long trial, two pain clinic owners received 25 and 29 years in federal prison, while a prescribing physician was sentenced to 21 years. This outstanding result is even more remarkable considering AUSA Rosenberg was sole counsel for the United States throughout the entire investigation and prosecution.

Richard Lee Edwards (Western District of North Carolina) is nominated for exemplary work in a series of prosecutions involving public corruption by high-ranking officials within the Buncombe County government, resulting

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in the convictions of the County Manager, two Assistant County Managers, another county employee, and a private contractor doing business with the county. The schemes included county officials awarding millions of dollars in contracts in exchange for luxurious vacations, gifts, and misusing county credit cards for personal purchases totaling more than \$200,00. This was in addition to the Manager misappropriating \$2.3 million to purchase prepaid whole-life insurance policies for herself, her son, the Assistant County Managers, and eight other senior county employees. AUSA Edwards and the agents working with him were able to obtain a vast quantity of documents and interviews, and marshal them into a series of thorough speaking indictments that resulted in guilty pleas by all the defendants with sentences of up to seven years.

Rahul Agarwal (District of New Jersey) is recognized for leading the investigation and prosecution of seven Paterson, New Jersey police officers for assaulting hospital patients; distributing and selling narcotics; conducting unlawful vehicle stops, searches, and seizures; exhibiting unlawful use of force; and extorting Patterson residents for their money and property. AUSA Agarwal did so with the support and involvement of the Patterson Police Chief, leading to the prospect of real reform by the police department and the City of Paterson's government. The Paterson Police Chief directly credited his knowledge of and support for AUSA Agarwal's investigation for his decision to review and make changes to the department's hiring and personnel practices. AUSA Agarwal's work, which was described by local press as "a story of the justice system working," is an example of the important role the Department of Justice continues to play in maintaining public trust in our local police departments, ensuring every community receives the commitment to public safety to which it is entitled.

Sean Sullivan and Holland Kastrin (District of New Mexico) are recognized for their outstanding work in successfully prosecuting Arthur Perrault. Perrault, as an ordained Catholic Priest, abused more than 30 children in New Mexico from the 1960s to the 1990s. In 1992, as allegations

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against him began to surface, Perrault fled the United States. After an extensive investigation, AUSAs Sullivan and Kastrin secured federal charges in 2017 based on Perrault's abuse of one victim on federal land. Perrault was extradited to New Mexico and convicted following an eight-day trial. Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Kastrin convinced the court to allow the testimony of seven additional victims under Federal Rule of Evidence 414, giving the jury a fuller account of Perrault's egregious conduct. On September 13, 2019, Perrault was sentenced to 365 months in prison.

Salvatore L. Astolfi and Jeanine Linehan (Eastern District of Pennsylvania) are recognized for their superior performance in the prosecution of 20 defendants in *United States v. Khalil Smith, et al.* Over a nearly two-year period, in various locations throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey, 20 well-organized and vicious defendants, led by Smith, conspired to commit violent crimes, including armed-home-invasion robberies, kidnappings, carjackings of drug dealers, and an attempted armed robbery of a jeweler. Members of the conspiracy conducted surveillance of their victims, tracked them using GPS devices, and used police scanners to monitor police radio traffic to evade apprehension by law enforcement. On several occasions, co-conspirators impersonated police officers to facilitate their crimes. They shot and threatened to shoot their victims, physically restrained them with handcuffs and zipties, and held them captive for several hours. Their longstanding crime spree was halted through the dogged efforts of the prosecutors working closely with their law enforcement partners.

Michelle L. Olshefski, Francis P. Sempa (Middle District of Pennsylvania), and Evan J. Gotlob (District of Massachusetts) are recognized for their exemplary work in the case of *United States v. Dr. Fuhai Li*, which involved a corrupt physician who operated a massive "pill mill" under the guise of a pain management clinic. In the first federal case of its kind in the district, Li was convicted after a five-week trial of unlawfully prescribing opioid pills to 23 former patients, including a woman who gave birth to an opioid-dependent baby 11 days after Li prescribed her an

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excessive amount of pills, and another woman who overdosed and died as a result of using the pills. Li was also convicted of money laundering and tax evasion litigating multiple complex post-verdict motions and sentencing guidelines objections, on April 4, 2019, Li was sentenced to serve 330 months in prison.

Amanda J. Klopff (Middle District of Tennessee) is recognized for her role in successfully prosecuting nine individuals engaged in a deadly fentanyl distribution conspiracy that resulted in a massive number of overdoses. In July 2016, law enforcement and medical responders in Murfreesboro, Tennessee were overwhelmed with more than two dozen overdose incidents during a 24-hour period. At least four deaths occurred during this period and the overdoses were attributed to counterfeit Percocet pills, which had been locally manufactured at a home in the Nashville area and actually contained a deadly combination of fentanyl, alprazolam, and acetaminophen. AUSA Klopff's accomplishments were particularly notable as she guided the investigation; prepared the case for trial against four of the defendants, three of whom were found guilty of all charges; and assisted drug-addicted victims and witnesses. Five additional co-conspirators pleaded guilty. Defendants received sentences of up to 30 years in prison.

Bill Harris (Western District of Texas) is recognized for the outstanding work he did to root out public corruption in Crystal City, Texas, a border town described by the *Washington Post* as, "the most corrupt little town in America." AUSA Harris indicted the current and former mayor, city manager, city attorney, and several city council members on charges related to a bribery and kickback scheme. The investigation was complex and required consultation and coordination with PRAO, OEO, and PSEU, as well as taint teams, wiretaps, and the search of an attorney's office. After a jury trial, AUSA Harris secured sentences totaling nearly 50 years imprisonment, and secured over a million dollars in restitution for a town that was left nearly bankrupt by corruption. AUSA Harris' work profoundly affected the citizens of Crystal City and restored the public's confidence in local government.

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Patricia Giles and Morris Parker, Jr. (Eastern District of Virginia), and Tobias Tobler (Western District of Washington) are recognized for their exemplary efforts in the prosecution of ten members and associates of the Virginia Locos Salvatruchas (VLS) clique of MS-13, who perpetrated a violent extortion scheme that included kidnapping and murdering a teenager they suspected was a rival gang member. The prosecution team secured guilty pleas from four defendants, three of whom pled guilty to kidnapping resulting in death. The case culminated in a month-long trial against the remaining six defendants, during which the team presented hundreds of exhibits and testimony from cooperating defendants, experts, linguists, and victims, among others. The jury convicted each defendant on all counts. Ultimately, the eight defendants who participated in the kidnapping and murder, including three who plead guilty, received life sentences. As a result of the dedicated efforts of the prosecution team, the leadership of VLS was eliminated, and the clique's membership was decimated.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AS
AN ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY – CIVIL**

Richard Pomeroy (District of Alaska) is awarded for his 29 years of sustained excellence in representing the United States in an array of difficult and complex medical malpractice litigation, arising in the unique circumstances of Alaska's special health care challenges. AUSA Pomeroy's work in other areas, his contributions to the management of the office, and his other contributions to the Department as a whole, are also worthy of recognition.

Michael Campion and Kelly Horan Florio (District of New Jersey) are awarded for their civil rights work in the District of New Jersey. Collaborating with CRT and other USAO-DNJ colleagues, they zealously pursue and obtain justice on behalf of those who are deprived of their civil rights. Among other causes, they fight for the rights of military personnel under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, the disabled and mobility-impaired under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the imprisoned under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, victims of discrimination under the Civil Rights Act and the Fair Housing Act, and persons of faith under the Religious Land Use Institutionalized Persons Act. As recognized experts in their field, they speak at events across New Jersey, educating the public about civil rights and the Department's notable civil rights initiatives, including the Initiative to Combat Sexual Harassment in Housing, Place of Worship Initiative, and Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative.

F. Franklin Amanat (Eastern District of New York) is recognized for his exceptional performance in handling a series of complex and difficult challenges to federal immigration policy, including Presidential Proclamation 9645. In these cases, which were brought by several hundred Yemeni nationals and their relatives in the United States, Mr. Amanat worked tirelessly to defend the interests of the United States, defeat class

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certification, and obtain pre-discovery dismissals of plaintiffs' claims for relief under the Constitution and Administrative Procedures Act. In more than two decades as an AUSA, Mr. Amanat consistently demonstrates the highest level of skill and tenacity in representing the interests of the United States in sophisticated affirmative cases. AUSA Amanat also served as lead counsel in the prosecution of Barclays Bank for its fraudulent issuance of RMBS, which resulted in an unprecedented \$2 billion FIRREA settlement.

Marianne Hardcastle and Kristin Harrington (Northern District of Oklahoma) are recognized for exemplary work as ACE AUSAs in eleven healthcare fraud matters totaling \$2,140,023 in damages from providers and marketers who participated in a prescribing scheme for compounded pain cream. Their extraordinary teamwork and efforts ensure the integrity of taxpayer-funded programs. In addition to their outstanding performance related to complicated healthcare fraud, AUSAs Hardcastle and Harrington demonstrate unique forward-thinking abilities in combating the national opioid epidemic by offering assistance with obtaining Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program grant funding through the Bureau of Justice Assistance program. Local law enforcement agencies, health department officials, and other agencies are educated on the grant money available. Finally, Ms. Hardcastle and Ms. Harrington maximize small-district resources to tackle other priorities of the Department, including elder fraud.

Anthony D. Scicchitano (Eastern District of Pennsylvania) is recognized for his extraordinary accomplishments in the civil prosecution of complex opioid matters in one of the districts hardest hit by the epidemic. AUSA Scicchitano developed a comprehensive approach to identifying, investigating, and prosecuting prescribers in collaboration with the EDPA Criminal Division, along with DEA, HHS OIG, and FBI. This work yielded substantial and tangible case results in matters AUSA Scicchitano directly handled, resulting in \$8.3 million in over ten different cases, including: a ground-breaking consent judgment revoking the DEA registration of a doctor who overprescribed opioids and imposing a \$400,000 penalty; an

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Anti-Fraud Injunction Act asset freeze of over \$1.6 million involving a doctor charged with healthcare fraud and diversion; five resolutions totaling over \$1.8 million levied against providers with aberrant prescribing practices and imposing prescribing restrictions; and lastly, a \$2.85 million resolution involving alleged upcoding of substance use disorder treatment.

Andrew Han and Christine Roushdy (Eastern District of Virginia) are recognized for their outstanding representation of TSA in an employment discrimination suit brought by Mark Livingston, a former probationary member of the Transportation Security Executive Service (TSES). Livingston alleged he was removed from his TSES position because of his Native American background, disability status, and opposition to sexual harassment. Livingston claimed his high marks as an intelligence officer necessarily meant that his removal from the TSES could not have been, as TSA claimed, based on his poor leadership performance. Nevertheless, AUSAs Han and Roushdy successfully demonstrated that Livingston's removal was an entirely appropriate exercise of TSA's business judgment in choosing its own leaders. After a lengthy jury trial, which involved testimony from nearly a dozen senior-level TSA officials, including two former TSA Deputy Administrators, the team obtained a complete defense verdict in a high-profile case that received significant media scrutiny.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AS AN
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY – APPELLATE**

Mary Beth Young (Southern District of Ohio) is recognized for her outstanding performance as an Appellate AUSA and the Southern District of Ohio's Appellate Chief. AUSA Young fosters integrity, improves accountability, and tirelessly advances the government's interest. Of particular note, AUSA Young's successful handling of the appeal in *United States v. Ledbetter* preserved life sentences for five members, including the *de facto* leader of the violent Short North Posse gang. The combined appeal raised 15 distinct claims.

Cecil VanDevender (Middle District of Tennessee) is recognized for his role in the successful challenge to the Tennessee Supreme Court's Board of Professional Responsibility's Formal Ethics Opinion 2017-F-163, which radically changed the duties of every prosecutor in the state. The opinion held that Rule 3.8(d) set forth an ethical rule that was far broader in scope than the principles set forth in *Brady v. Maryland* and elsewhere. AUSA VanDevender's brilliant legal mind and unimpeachable judgment yielded a draft that became the basis for the amicus brief filed by the Department challenging the opinion. His patience, spirit of cooperation, and relentless attention to detail, enabled the United States to file a brief that played a large part in the Tennessee Supreme Court's rejection and vacatur of the opinion. This was win for every prosecutor in Tennessee, and given the national importance of the issue, in the country.

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**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE AS A SPECIAL
ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Jennifer Mika (District of Columbia) is recognized for her superior performance. On detail from the Office of the Attorney General to the USAO-DC to take on a specialized caseload of elder fraud cases, SAUSA Mika went above-and-beyond in executing that task. First, AUSA Mika used her connections doing related work at OAG to develop a network of law enforcement contacts. Second, she delved into USAO resources to identify new leads. Third, she proactively reached out to engage the community. Where these leads identified a viable case, she investigated and filed appropriate charges, developing a portfolio of complex matters exceptional for a SAUSA.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE BY A LITIGATIVE TEAM

David A. Pimsner , William C. Solomon, and Steve Scheps (District of Arizona); Melissa B. Karlen (Executive Office of Immigration Review); Joseph N. Kaster (National Security Division); Brittany M. Stephenson, Clint B. Hemberg, Cody Rehner, Daniel B. Lien, Dina L. McCarthy, Gregory R. Neville, Heidi N. Thornsby, Rimón S. Dahdal, Stephen J. Malloy, and Stewart L. Whitson (Federal Bureau of Investigation) are recognized for their outstanding work in investigating and convicting Ahmed Alahmedalabdalkhah, a Syrian-born engineer who conspired with an Iraqi terrorist group to manufacture custom electronic circuit boards for improvised explosive devices. These devices were used in roadside bombs that targeted American troops in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. This was an extraordinarily challenging case to investigate and prosecute because it dealt with the collection and analysis of evidence by the military, who were focused on countering the terroristic attacks and not on developing a future criminal case in the United States. The team members overcame substantial challenges to convict the defendant at trial. Their hard work and dedication not only exemplifies how to successfully proceed against those who commit acts of terrorism against American interests abroad, but it also shows that such individuals can and will be brought to justice in the United States.

David E. Novick and Paul H. McConnell (District of Connecticut); Russell C. Day (Federal Bureau of Investigation); and Peter Pinelli (Connecticut State Police Department) are recognized for the successful investigation and prosecution of Emanuel Nicolescu, Michael Kennedy, and Alexandru Nicolescu for their involvement in a 2007 home invasion and conspiracy to extort \$8.5 million from two South Kent, Connecticut residents. Emanuel and Alexandru Nicolescu slipped into the victims' home in the dead of night, accosted them at gun and knife point, injected them with a purported "virus," and demanded millions of dollars for the antidote. After many hours, and with no money forthcoming, the defendants drugged the

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victims, stole their car, and fled into the night, leaving virtually no trace. After years of dormancy, the awardees took up the investigation and pieced together an intricate web of clues to finally identify, apprehend, and convict the three defendants.

Barbara Lotharp, Jamie M. McCall, Karen Hill, Lesley F. Wolf, Robert F. Kravetz, and Stefania Roca (District of Delaware); David F. Bole and Greg S. Mrozek (Federal Bureau of Investigation); Jessica Reider Dungee (U.S. Marshals Service); Antonino Lo Piccolo (Internal Revenue Service); Michael Ross (Office of the Inspector General); Brendan Clarke and Sarah McNally (Office of the Special Inspector General) are recognized for an extraordinary seven-year effort unraveling a complex stream of criminal conduct that culminated in convictions and substantial prison sentences for four senior bank executives of the Wilmington Trust Corporation. Following a two-month jury trial in 2018, the bank's former President, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Credit Officer and its Controller became some of the very few bank officers in the nation that were held accountable for their criminal conduct relating to the 2008 financial crisis. The bank itself was criminally charged and eventually agreed to a civil forfeiture of \$60 million. For the community, M&T's acquisition of the bank represented a heartbreaking final chapter for a century old institution and the loss of more than 700 jobs. The successful prosecution of these executives brought recovery to shareholders, and for many citizens of Delaware a sense of justice and closure.

Amanda P.M. Strachan, Christopher R. Looney, George P. Varghese, Kathleen Griffin and Rachel L. Savas (District of Massachusetts); John W.M. Claud (DOJ Consumer Protection Branch); Benedict Celso, David J. Kelly, Frank L. Lombardo, Michael Mangiacotti, and Joseph Ridgley (Food and Drug Administration); Phillip M. Sliney, Jr. (Federal Bureau of Investigation); Jason Kravetz (Department of Veteran Affairs- OIG); Sara Albert (Department of Defense- OIG); and Brian Evans (U.S. Postal Inspection Service) are awarded for the investigation and prosecution

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of the owners, executives, and pharmacists of New England Compounding Center, the compounding pharmacy that manufactured contaminated steroids that led to the 2012 nationwide fungal meningitis outbreak. The fungal meningitis outbreak infected approximately 793 individuals throughout the country and led to more than 100 deaths. It was the largest public health crisis ever caused by a pharmaceutical drug. Over the past seven years, the team's extraordinary efforts led to the convictions, following four trials, of 13 individuals on numerous charges, including RICO, RICO conspiracy, and mail fraud. Additionally, the team successfully lobbied the Office of Victims of Crime and the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office to recognize the fungal meningitis victims as crime victims with access to the Victims of Violent Crimes Compensation Fund, and secured a \$40 million federal contribution to ensure compensation for the victims.

Saima Shafiq Mohsin, Eric M. Straus, and Linda M. Aouate (Eastern District of Michigan); Jerome M. Maiatico (Eastern District of Pennsylvania); Debra C. Vainio and Ivana A. Nizich (DOJ Criminal Division); and William R. Fleming and David Opperman (Federal Bureau of Investigation) are recognized for their extraordinary work in significantly disrupting the activities of a large, violent, national criminal organization known as the Devils Disciples Motorcycle Club (DDMC). The multi-year investigation and extremely complex prosecution led to the conviction of more than 50 defendants who were sentenced to incarceration for a combined total of more than 321 years. Most pleaded guilty, but the team successfully convicted eight members, including the national leaders, of RICO conspiracy and other serious felonies after two lengthy trials involving dozens of offenses, spanning more than 20 years, by members and associates in several states. The National President, Vice President, Warlord, and Regional Boss received life sentences, while the remaining trial defendants received sentences between 28 and 38 years in prison. As a result, the DDMC shifted their national leadership and headquarters out of Michigan, closed several local chapters, shut down their website, and virtually eliminated their methamphetamine manufacturing practices.

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Maria Y. Armijo, Randy M. Castellano, Emily B. Sroka, and C. Roxane Castillo (District of New Mexico); Bryan Acee, Nancy Stemo, Thomas Neale, Joseph Sainato, and Janet Baca (Federal Bureau of Investigation); Christopher J. Cupit, Mark Myers, and Sergio Sapien (New Mexico Corrections Department) are recognized for their superior performance in the investigation and prosecution of the Sindicato Nuevo Mexico (SNM) prison gang. The SNM is an ultraviolent prison gang that controlled the majority of New Mexico's prisons and Hispanic street gangs. In March 2015, agents learned of an SNM plot to murder high-ranking corrections department officials. Because of an aggressive investigation, the murder plots were foiled and numerous SNM leaders and members were charged with federal and state crimes, including multiple racketeering counts relating to cold-case homicides. Over 120 SNM members and associates were arrested, with over 90 charged with federal violations, 70 percent were on the streets when arrested, and the vast majority pled guilty. Between January and July 2018, nine defendants were convicted in three separate multi-week trials and later were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Mollie Bracewell, Elinor Tarlow, Jacob Gutwillig, and Peter Davis (Southern District of New York); Brian Gander, Candice Casillas, Edwin Rodriguez, Kelly Maguire, Laura Riso, and Thomas Thompson (Federal Bureau of Investigation); Anton Rzhnevskiy, Gloria Chavez, Joseph Picarello, and Rosemarie Muckenthaler (New York City Police Department); and Anthony Scoma (New York City Department of Corrections) are recognized for their work on the Hard-Knock Investigation. Starting with a tip about the trafficking of minor victims in and around the New York City area, which led to a subsequent interview of one particular minor victim, the Hard-Knock Investigation resulted in the successful investigation and prosecution of violent pimps who trafficked minor and adult victims. These victims, including those as young as 13, were generally already part of the New York City social services systems. The investigation resulted in charges against 19 defendants in eight separate

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indictments; to date, 15 of the defendants have been convicted—two following jury trials and 13 by plea. The team interviewed over 40 victims and identified dozens more potential targets. The first defendant sentenced in this matter, convicted following a May 2019 jury trial, received a sentence of 17 years in prison, and the remaining convicted defendants face substantial sentences, some including mandatory minimum terms of incarceration. The litigation team also provided direct services to trafficking victims, including emergency housing, counseling, medical, legal, and other services.

Michelle L. Morgan and Anthony J. Wzorek (Eastern District of Pennsylvania); Carmen Dimario, Thomas Marakovits, Joseph Bushner, and Scott Curtis (Federal Bureau of Investigation) are recognized for leading the successful corruption prosecutions of the mayors of Pennsylvania's third and fifth largest cities, Allentown and Reading. During one six-week trial, the team convicted Allentown Mayor Edwin Pawlowski of engaging in an extensive pay-to-play scheme in which Pawlowski exchanged lucrative city contracts in return for contributions to Pawlowski's gubernatorial and Senate campaigns. Through the team's efforts, 11 other defendants, including Allentown's managing director, finance director, controller, a deputy city solicitor, a political advisor, and two lawyers, were convicted of participating in the pay-to-play scheme. In a related prosecution, the team convicted Reading Mayor Vaughn Spencer of engaging in pay-to-play politics for exchanging city contracts for contributions to his mayoral campaign. Through the team's efforts, six other defendants, including the Mayor's chief of staff, the city council president, and a Reading school board member were convicted after a two-week trial of participating in the pay-to-play scheme.

Nikolas Kerest and Owen Foster (District of Vermont); Edward Crooke and Kelley Hauser (DOJ Civil Division) are recognized for their work in obtaining a settlement of \$57.25 million with Greenway Health, a software developer that sells electronic health records (EHR) software, to

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resolve allegations under the False Claims Act. Under the EHR Incentive Program, the United States made millions of dollars in incentive payments to healthcare providers who used Greenway's software and attested to achieving certain "Meaningful Use" metrics. Through big data analytics, software code analysis, and old-fashioned document review and witness interviews, the team developed allegations that Greenway hacked its software to cheat certification testing, intentionally inflated its users' Meaningful Use metrics to qualify for incentives, and paid kickbacks to providers. As part of the settlement, the team filed a detailed public complaint to ensure transparency about a product used to manage health records of millions of Americans. Notably, the team resolved the matter in under two years, without a whistleblower or agency referral.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN A
LITIGATIVE SUPPORT ROLE**

Tammy Zelina (District of Arizona) is recognized for her work as the Immigration Paralegal for the Tuscon Office in 2017 and 2018. Ms. Zelina trained new-hire AUSAs, support staff, and agents detailed to the U.S. Attorney's Office. In that role, Ms. Zelina drafted and implemented various processes and procedures for the criminal division and our federal law enforcement partners to comply with the Zero Tolerance Initiative. Ms. Zelina always sought the most efficient and cost-effective ways to process a voluminous immigration caseload. She embraced the Department's mission with respect to immigration enforcement. During the government shutdown in late 2018 and early 2019, Ms. Zelina implemented a new procedure for disclosure sent to the defense and federal probation that saved the District of Arizona approximately \$17,000 from December 2018 to October 2019. From 2017 to October 2019, Ms. Zelina was responsible for preparing and processing 4,715 felony illegal reentry cases and 504 felony alien smuggling cases.

Meredith Ketchum (Southern District of Florida) is recognized for her 18 years of consistent and superior performance in a legal support role in the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida. She mastered many of the new technologies offered by the Department and effectively utilized those technologies to assist AUSAs in the litigation of affirmative and defensive civil cases. Because of her superb paralegal skills and grasp of legal theories, Ms. Ketchum contributed substantially to many False Claims Act whistleblower actions, which resulted in the recovery of hundreds of millions of dollars in the past three years. During this time, Ms. Ketchum played an integral role during discovery and at trial in five civil defensive cases, with one obstetrical malpractice trial lasting five weeks.

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Katie Cook (District of Maine) is awarded for her decade as an invaluable resource in the field of information technology and automated litigation support for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Maine and the overall U.S. Attorney Community. Ms. Cook's innovative approach to the use of technology dramatically increased the effectiveness and efficiency of the district's operations. Ms. Cook is recognized as one of the leading Litigation Technology Specialists in the country and is often solicited by EOUSA for her input on use of e-discovery software, database development, case management, and the creation of specialized programs. Her concepts and original use of technology not only affect her district, but the nation as a whole. Ms. Cook's skills and tenacity result in accomplishments that most find impossible. She brings boundless energy, creativity, and compassion to her job while gracefully dealing with the countless demands of user support and system operations. Ms. Cook is indispensable to this district's ability to meet our mission.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN ADMINISTRATION

Lorin McAllister (Executive Office for United States Attorneys) is recognized for his service in proactively and creatively developing a protocol to eliminate forfeiture revenue recognition errors in the U.S. Attorney's Offices. For many years, the incomplete entry of forfeiture order information into the Consolidated Asset Tracking System (CATS) had caused audit exceptions and reflected negatively in the annual audit of the Department's Assets Forfeiture Fund (AFF) financial statements. After 15 years as an asset forfeiture contactor in a USAO, Mr. McAllister joined EOUSA in 2017 and immediately took steps to identify the causes of, and develop counter measures to prevent, these material weakness audit findings. Mr. McAllister worked with asset forfeiture AUSAs and USAO legal support professionals to improve the quality and timeliness of information entered into CATS. Mr. McAllister determined that the removal of forfeiture decisions in the USAOs was a primary source of repeated audit findings. Therefore, Mr. McAllister created a "District Administrator" role in the USAOs; each USAO now has a designated individual responsible for CATS entries in the district. Moreover, Mr. McAllister facilitated CATS system changes to allow only the CATS District Administrators to remove forfeiture decisions from CATS and he implemented a policy to require EOUSA approval for any forfeiture decision removal involving forfeited assets valued in excess of \$500,000. The auditor for the AFF advised the Department's Chief Financial Officer that forfeiture revenue errors in FY 2019 were at the lowest point in recent history and that there will be no mention of out-of-period revenue in the FY 2019 AFF audit report. Mr. McAllister's efforts were significant in achieving this tremendous accomplishment.

Lisa Engelke (Western District of Oklahoma) is recognized for superior performance in administration. As Administrative Officer since 2013, Ms. Engelke demonstrates exceptional leadership in cultivating an effective administrative team that provides high-quality services to attorneys and

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support staff. In addition to her efficient work on challenging projects, such as moving half of the office's employees to new work spaces within a matter of days, she mentors new Administrative Division staff in a way that promotes a healthy office culture. Ms. Engelke serves as an integral part of the office's security program and works toward the Department's larger goals as a member of the Administrative Officers Working Group and as an EARS evaluator. Ms. Engelke is key to her office's success, both indirectly in its litigation work and directly in its long-term stability and well-being.

Linda Dickson (Western District of Texas) is recognized for her unparalleled impact on the operations of the Western District of Texas in her role as Human Resources Officer. Her expertise and innovative practices were especially beneficial in the last year-and-a-half as she assisted management in executing a major reorganization of the district's supervisory structure involving the realignment of over 115 positions and more than 15 supervisory changes during a time of unprecedented hiring of over 100 employees. Ms. Dickson also worked hand-in-hand with management to identify and assess critical skill gaps, then developed a forward-looking creative plan to realign the limited available support staff full-time employees into newly classified positions more aligned with the challenges of supporting litigation in a digital world.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE BY AN
ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

Jason DeJesus, Sergey Gluzberg, Richard Jones, Daniel Shapiro (District of New Jersey), Susan Cooke, John Haried, Tonia Jones, and Virginia Vance (Executive Office for United States Attorneys) are recognized for their cooperative effort in overhauling the eLitigation practices and protocols for the District of New Jersey. DeJesus, Gluzberg, Jones, and AUSA Shapiro formulated the Office's standalone eLitigation Unit; improved the eLitigation competencies of paralegals; developed and automated a common folder structure for civil and criminal cases; instituted an electronic system for the generation and tracking of grand jury subpoenas; and adopted defensible workflows for the intake, processing, review, and production of data. Cooke, Haried, Jones, and Vance provided exemplary support throughout the restructuring. The team unwaveringly provided sound advice based on their knowledge of eLitigation practices in offices across the country. They even went as far as to travel to New Jersey on several occasions to meet with stakeholders, issue-spot, and define deliverables.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

William Voit (District of Arizona) is recognized for his exceptional contributions to the Department's efforts in Indian Country. Since 2016, AUSA Voit prosecuted numerous high-profile Indian Country cases. In just the past year, he successfully prosecuted George Renteria for an execution-style murder on the Gila River Indian Community, and Murphy Begay for the rape of an 11-year old victim. Mr. Voit's contributions, however, have not been limited to casework alone. He conducts trainings, works with tribal partners, and enhances coordination with law enforcement in Indian Country. Mr. Voit often drives ten hours round-trip to meet with a single victim or tribal partner. AUSA Voit also helped lead a violent offender initiative that brought to justice numerous violent offenders on the Navajo Nation, who might have otherwise escaped justice. His around-the-clock efforts not only advanced public safety in Indian Country, but helped foster community trust in the process.

Amy Connor (District of Colorado); Savanna Joe (Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs); and Lisa Manzanares (Southern Ute Police Department) are recognized for transforming the prosecution of violent crime in Indian Country in Colorado. By ensuring collaboration between two Indian Tribes and the USAO, the nominees overcame cultural barriers that hinder Indian Country victims from accessing justice. Their collective efforts ensure that victims are identified and counseled through culturally informed processes. The awardees keep victims informed, direct them to appropriate services and when necessary, transport the victims to court. In two separate sex assault trials this year, several sentencing, as well as in numerous ongoing investigations, the nominees educated and empowered victims to speak out against those who harmed them. By doing this, the nominees delivered superior service for vulnerable victims in Indian Country, making communities safer and enabling victims to heal.

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Lecia Wright and Kelli Ceraolo (District of Nebraska) are recognized for their excellence in securing guilty verdicts and a life sentence in the Indian Country prosecution of Cyrus Free. Free was convicted on five counts of sexual abuse of a minor beginning when the minor was eight and continuing until the minor disclosed the abuse when she was 14. In addition to overcoming delayed reporting, AUSAs Wright and Ceraolo dealt with pressure from the defendant and other family members attempting to persuade the child not to testify. AUSAs Wright and Ceraolo regularly handle the most difficult of child sexual assaults, sexual assaults, domestic assaults, and other violent crimes occurring on the Omaha, Winnebago, and Santee Indian Reservations in Nebraska.

SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Sarah J. Schall (Southern District for Florida) is recognized for her work as Special Counsel to U.S. Attorney Ariana Fajardo Orshan and as the sole Public Information Officer (PIO) for the third largest USAO in the country. In this multi-faceted role, Ms. Schall provides guidance to the U.S. Attorney and her colleagues; serves as a speechwriter for the U.S. Attorney and spokesperson for the office; and fosters community and law enforcement partnerships. Since 2016, Ms. Schall has served as a member of the national U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Officer Working Group. Ms. Schall attends law enforcement coordination meetings and narcotics off-load events in support of agency partners, organized press conferences to highlight significant enforcement operations in South Florida, and attended faith-based community events. Ms. Schall provides training regarding the Elder Justice Initiative, speaks at local career day programs, and serves as a law student and diversity recruitment ambassador for the Department.

Jennifer Thornton (Southern District of Ohio) is recognized for her outstanding contributions in public affairs, including her success in increasing awareness of her district's efforts to tackle the opioid abuse crisis in Ohio. Ms. Thornton's organizational abilities, professionalism, knowledge of the community's needs, and the respect of her peers helped create a unified voice from law enforcement, treatment providers, neighborhood groups, and federal, state, and local agencies. Ms. Thornton coordinated local, regional, national, and international media coverage of hundreds of cases and issues in the district, including cases involving an alleged Chinese spy who targeted a large aviation company in her district, a priest from Cincinnati accused of sexually exploiting children in the Philippines, an international oil bid-rigging case that victimized the U.S. military, and charges our office brought that arose out of the August 2019 mass shooting in Dayton.

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Kevin Sonoff (District of Oregon) is recognized for his exceptional work in advance of and during a mass protest in Portland, Oregon. For two years, far-right and far-left protestors engaged in escalating street violence. When another protest was announced for August 17, 2019, Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Sonoff worked closely with the Portland Police Bureau and FBI officials to develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy designed to deter violence and shape public perception of law enforcement's intended response. Mr. Sonoff organized two press conferences featuring the U.S. Attorney and coordinated dozens of media interviews. On the day of the protest, he managed the Joint Information Center's Information Gathering Unit. In that capacity, he timely pushed factual information to the media in order to limit misinformation. The protest ended with minimal arrests, injuries, and criminal violence. The public information campaign led by PAO Sonoff was an important component to the success of law enforcement's response to the protests.

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE IN
PREVENTION AND REENTRY ACTIVITIES**

Laurel Boatright and Dr. Danielle Whyly (District of Northern Georgia) are recognized for their superior performance in prevention and reentry activities. Under AUSA Boatright and Dr. Whyly's leadership, the PSN program successfully partnered with local organizations to implement a Credible Messenger Initiative, a project that intervenes with high-risk incarcerated juveniles and adults scheduled for release in the district's Target Enforcement Areas. The district's ambitious initiative deploys former offenders to target groups of juvenile and adult males convicted of gang- or gun-related criminal activity with learning strategies to avoid the circumstances that led them to engage in criminal activity. The initiative also empowers these offenders, upon release, to restore their own communities through peer-to-peer support and family reconciliation. AUSA Boatright and Dr. Whyly's combined leadership advanced their district's PSN program, while providing critical support to nearly 200 former offenders as they reenter their communities.

Alexi Mantsios (Southern District of New York) is recognized for his work as Law Enforcement Coordinator for the Southern District of New York. AUSA Mantsios serves as the district's Prevention and Re-Entry Coordinator and is critical in furthering the SDNY's crime prevention and reentry work missions. AUSA Mantsios was essential in the establishment of two reentry courts, a pretrial diversion program for young adult offenders, numerous PSN crime prevention programs, an awareness campaign to address the opioid epidemic, and an innovative neighborhood revitalization program. The initiatives are very successful and other USAOs are interested in replicating many of them. AUSA Mantsios is highly regarded and has built strong relationships with the judiciary; federal, state and local law enforcement; and community partners, which contribute to the success of his work. Mr. Mantsios is invaluable in furthering national DOJ initiatives, as well as addressing issues affecting our local communities.

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